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## A "LOCAL HIT" IN EDWARDS'S

*DAMON AND PYTHIAS.*

A good example of a "local hit" in a play of the early English drama, is found in one of the comic passages of Richard Edwards's *Damon and Pythias* (1564), which was performed both at Westminster before the Queen and at Edwards's own university of Oxford. The passage has to do with the huge hose that the young pages wear, and gets its point from the fact that large hose and general extravagance in dress were so much the rage at Oxford that the authorities at the university had made most detailed regulations that year regarding the wearing apparel of all its dependents.

These sumptuary laws are stated by Anthony á Wood in his *History and Antiquities of Oxford* (ed. Gutch, vol. ii, p. 153 ff., *The Annals. Anno Domini 1564*). Among them is the following, "against the excess of apparel that was used by sorts of Scholars, namely, that 'no Head of a House, graduat or Scholar, having either living of a College, Scholar's Exhibition, or spiritual promotion in any College or Hall, should weare any shirt with ruffs either at the hand or collar, except it be a single ruff without any work of gold, silver, or silke, and that not above an inch deep. Also that none of the said persons should wear any falling collar which falleth more than an inch over the Coat or other garment. *That they should not weare any cut hosen, or hoses lined with any other stuff to make them swell or puff out. Then also that they have but one lining, and that lining close to the legge, and that they put not more cloth in one pair of hose than a yard and an half at most, and that without buttons, lace or any gard of silk. That they should not openly wear any dublet of any light colour, as white, green, yellow, &c.*' which orders were imposed on the said persons with mulcts to the breakers of them."

Now, with this compare the passage referred to in *Damon and Pythias*. Grimm the Collier of Croyden, and the youngsters Jack and Will friendly pages to rival philosophers, are the chief funmakers of the tragicomedy. Jack and Will strut on to the stage in their huge breeches, an immense exaggeration of the exaggerated fashion, which are trebly ludicrous when worn by such midgets. The scene must have made an instant hit with the university audience, even before a

word was spoken. Then the dialogue follows (Dodsley's *Old Plays*, ed. 1825, vol. i, pp. 232-233):

- Grimme.* Are ye servants, then?  
*Wyll.* Yea, sir; are we not pretie men?  
*Grimme.* Pretie men (quoth you)? nay, you are stronge men, els you coulde not beare these britches.  
*Wyll.* Are these such great hose? in faith, goodman colier, you see with your nose:  
 By myne honestie, I have but one lining in one hose, but seven els of roug.  
*Grimme.* This is but a little, yet it makes thee seeme a great bugge.  
*Jacke.* How say you, goodman colier, can you finde any fault here?  
*Grimme.* Nay, you should finde faught, mary here's trim geare!  
 Alas, little knave, dost not sweat?  
 Thou goest with great payne,  
 These are no hose, bnt water bougets, I tell thee playne;  
 Good for none but suche as have no buttockes.  
 Dyd you ever see two suche little Robin ruddockes  
 So laden with breeches? chill say no more leste I offend.  
 Who invented these monsters first, did it to a gostly ende,  
 To have a male<sup>1</sup> readie to put in other folkes stuffe,  
 Wee see this evident by dayly prooffe.  
 One preached of late not farre hence, in no pulpet, but in a wayne carte,<sup>2</sup>  
 That spake enough of this; but for my parte,  
 Chil say no more: your owne necessitie.  
 In the end wyll force you to finde some remedy.
- . . . . .

<sup>1</sup> Pouch.

<sup>2</sup> Another hit, the meaning of which is not now plain. Fleay makes Fulwel the "preacher"; seeing here a reference to *Like Will to Like*. But some Oxford thief caught with the goods in his "male," and whipped through town at the tail of a cart, may have been the man who "preached."

Wyll. . . . father Grimme, gayly well  
 you doo say,  
 It is but young mens folly, that list  
 to playe,  
 And maske a whyle in the net of  
 their owne devise ;  
 When they come to your age they  
 wyll be wyse.

Grimme. Bum troth, but few such roysters  
 come to my yeares at this day ;  
 They be cut off betimes, or they have  
 gone halfe their journey :  
 I wyll not tell why : let them gesse  
 that can,  
 I meane somewhat thereby.

Mr. Fleay, in his *History of the Stage* (pp. 59–61), tries to use this passage in bolstering up his theory of a quarrel between Edwards and Ulpian Fulwel, author of *Like Will to Like*. He sees in this—just how or why is not made plain—a satirical allusion which he connects in some way with the reference in *Like Will to Like* to the breeches “big as good barrells” made by Nichol Newfangle, ’prentice to Lucifer.

The simple explanation is evident that in both *Like Will to Like* and *Damon and Pythias* the outrageously extravagant styles of the day were satirized. Here, over against an ell and a half to the pair of hose, as the authorities recommended, the young pages had seven ells of rug for each hose—fourteen to the pair! Grimms repeated, “Chill say no more leste I offend—Chil say no more,” gains its point from the presence of the dignitaries of the university in the audience. His pointed word, about roisters such as Jack and Will being “cut off betimes, or they have gone halfe their journey,” may simply refer to gay young students being rusticated by the university authorities.

The value of the local hit is perfectly plain, and it is absurd to seek in the passage any personality in an alleged author’s quarrel. Much the same effect was gained as was gained a few years ago on the comic-opera stage of Boston by the frequent references to Judge Emmons, eleven o’clock closing, and the semi-colon law.

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## EL PRÍNCIPE DON CARLOS OF XIMÉNEZ DE ENCISO.

Few historical personages have appealed more strongly to dramatists than Prince Don Carlos, son of Philip II of Spain. For a long time a mystery hung about the facts of his life and death. It was known that before Elizabeth of Valois married the King of Spain, her hand had been sought for the young Prince Carlos, and this afforded an opportunity to the romanticists, to spin out the pretty story of the Prince’s love for the Queen, his step-mother. Not until Gachard published his book, *D. Carlos et Philippe II*, in 1863 was the true character of the Prince shown, freed from all the romantic elements.

It is quite natural that the life of Prince Don Carlos should have proved attractive to the Spanish dramatists of the seventeenth century. He had died in the year 1568 under mysterious circumstances, which surely awakened great interest. In 1619, Cabrera de Córdoba published his life of Philip II,<sup>1</sup> which gave many details of the life and death of Don Carlos, and which was the principal source of the Spanish dramatists. It was this book which probably led Ximénez de Enciso and Juan Pérez de Montalbán to write their *comedias* on the subject of Don Carlos.

Which of these writers was the first to treat the subject can not be definitely decided. Montalbán’s *El Segundo Séneca de España y el Príncipe Don Carlos* was first published in his *Para Todos* in 1632, while Enciso’s play, *El Príncipe Don Carlos* did not appear, as far as we know, until two years later. Cabrera de Córdoba’s history was used as the chief source for both plays, and they strongly resemble each other in certain parts, but we can not assign priority, with certainty, to either one of them. As to their relative merit, all the advantage lies on the side of Enciso.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Filipe segundo Rey de España*, etc. En Madrid, año M.DC.XIX.

<sup>2</sup> A number of new facts concerning Enciso were published by Sr José Sánchez Arjona in his book, *Noticias referentes á los anales del teatro en Sevilla desde Lope de Rueda hasta fines del siglo XVII*. Sevilla, 1898. Moreto, in his *comedia*, *No puede ser el guardar una mujer*, Act I, scene 1,